

Toronto Metropolitan University and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

2023 Highlights

Toronto
Metropolitan
University



About the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

This report provides a summary of highlights of Toronto Metropolitan University's (TMU's) work to advance progress on the SDGs in 2023.





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



There are a total of 17 SDGs.

The following slides highlight examples of TMU programs and initiatives that relate to each SDG.

SDG 1: No Poverty



Student access and financial assistance

- Financial aid to support students in accessing postsecondary education:
 - [Student Access Guarantee](#) bursary assists with educational costs (e.g. tuition, books, supplies)
 - [Bursaries](#) to support first-generation students, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and youth in extended society care
 - Other need-based and merit-based [financial assistance, scholarships and bursaries](#) are available to support TMU students

Proportion of students receiving need-based financial aid: 52%

SDG 1: No Poverty (cont'd)



Impact in our community

- TMU is a long-standing supporter of United Way Greater Toronto. Since 2015 we have raised over \$1 million for local United Way agencies through our [annual giving campaign](#).
- The [BVZ Entrepreneurship Fund](#) is a community-backed fund fueling innovation at the Brampton Venture Zone by TMU and is committed to providing financial support to visionary founders shaping the landscape of technology startups at BVZ. With the generosity of our industry partners, the BVZ Entrepreneurship Fund has successfully raised \$200,000 to date.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger



Urban Farm

- [Urban Farm](#): Rooftop farm that harvests over 3,000 kg of fresh produce and sells them at affordable rates to students.
- The Urban Farm also brings together farmers, community partners and academics through [interdisciplinary research](#) that responds to the challenges of designing and operating a rooftop farm using green roof technology.

Sustainable food on campus

- [Ted's Kitchen](#) and [The Met Dining Room](#) are both Feast On certified, meaning they use over 65 per cent locally produced food items. Both restaurants provide top-quality ingredients at a low cost.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger (*cont'd*)

Sustainable dining on campus

- The [OZZI reusable to-go container](#) program in the Pitman and ILC dining halls reduces waste and single-use food packaging by encouraging use of a reusable to-go container that is 100% recyclable and can be used up to 300 times.
- The Pitman Dining Hall is a [3 Star Certified Green Restaurant](#) under the Green Restaurant Association's rigorous standards in categories like water efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable food, and chemical and pollution reduction.



SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being



School of Medicine

- TMU's [School of Medicine](#) building is under construction. The school will welcome the first cohorts to its undergraduate and graduate medical education programs in 2025.
- TMU's primary clinical partner William Osler Health System will provide the clinical learning environment for undergraduate medical education, other health professionals' education, residency training and professional development.

Proportion of TMU graduates in health professions (2023): 14.5%

Research

- The [CERC in Health Equity and Community Wellbeing](#) program is a transformative research initiative that employs an engaged community partnership approach to expand our understanding, practice, and delivery of health outcomes for all members of our communities.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being (cont'd)



Campus health services

- TMU's [Medical Centre](#) offers health services to students, staff and faculty, such as physicals, mental health assessments, assessments for common medical problems, immunizations and medical certificates.
- [Mental health services](#) on campus include the [Centre for Student Development and Counselling](#), the [Consent Comes First](#) healing-centred support for victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and the Wellbeing at Work initiative that offers resources to TMU employees.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being (cont'd)



Collaborations with health institutions

- TMU partners with local, national and global health institutions to support good health and well-being in the community. These include membership in the [Downtown East Toronto Ontario Health Team](#) to make it easier for patients to navigate the system and transition between providers. We are working to develop and maintain [partnerships with social agencies](#) to bring appropriate services to street-involved individuals who may be experiencing addictions, mental health, and who are unhoused.
- With support from TMU's Innovation Boost Zone, Scatr Inc. has been refining and commercializing a first-of-its kind [drug-testing device](#) that is a game changer in the fight against Canada's growing opioid crisis.
- At the international level, TMU worked with Amref Health Africa to [develop placement opportunities](#) for students, carry out joint research and implement collaborative projects.

SDG 4: Quality Education

First-generation students: 45.4%

Community outreach

- [SciXchange](#) offers innovative outreach programs to a wide-ranging audience of youth and adults while actively addressing traditional imbalances in STEM disciplines, such as through its [Stoodis program](#) for Indigenous youth in Toronto.
- The CERC in Migration and Integration draws on its research projects and findings to develop resources that bring knowledge and insights to life for learners. These include [educational tools](#) that will support educators teaching student groups, from elementary school and high school, to undergraduate and graduate students.



SDG 4: Quality Education (*cont'd*)



Supporting lifelong learning

- The [Chang School of Continuing Education](#) offers more than 70 certificate programs and over 1,000 courses to more than 30,000 active learners. This includes programs designed specifically for [people aged 50+](#).
- Specialized professional instruction offered at TMU includes an [Executive Program in Child Sex Trafficking and Online Child Sexual Exploitation](#) and the Rogers Cybersecure Catalyst's [Corporate Training](#) and [Accelerated Cybersecurity Training Program](#).
- TMU provides access to [open educational resources](#) (OER) that can be used freely for educational purposes. These resources include images and media files that can be used in teaching to presentations, lecture notes, assignments and free textbooks.

SDG 5: Gender Equality



Proportion of female graduates: 58.6%

Graduation rates: Female students - 80.7%; Male students - 72.0%

Applicants (2021): Female – 23,330 (53.2%); Male – 20,486 (46.8%)

Proportion of applicants registering (2021): Female – 14.1%; Male: 13.3%

Preventing discrimination and raising awareness

- TMU's [Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity or marital/family status.
- In November, advocacy and educational events celebrated, honoured and raised the visibility of the trans community during [Trans Awareness Month](#).

SDG 5: Gender Equality (*cont'd*)



Promoting success through community

- Several [on-campus clubs](#) bring together female students in specific subject areas to organize events, exchange information and address shared concerns.
- [Empowering Women in Academia @TMU](#) is an initiative intended to encourage networking, cultivate pan-university cross-discipline collaboration through the sharing of ideas, and foster mentoring among women and diverse academic staff. The initiative includes events and presentations to engage women and diverse academic staff undertaking innovative, ground-breaking and equity-based initiatives in a variety of areas.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation



Responsible water usage

- The Sheldon and Tracy Levy Student Learning Centre (SLC) and the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex (DCC) use [grey water collection systems](#) that collect, treat, and use water from showers, taps and rain to flush toilets.
- Vegetated landscaping and roofs help with stormwater management by reducing the runoff and absorbing most of it, before it gets to the city sewers.
 - Vegetated roofs exist on the Centre for Urban Innovation, DCC, George Vari Engineering and Computing Centre and SLC.

Water consumption per person: 8.09 m³

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation (*cont'd*)



Teaching and research

- TMU's Emerging Contaminants Lab is [working with the Ontario Ministry of Environment](#) to determine if plastic additives are entering the environment from wastewater effluent.
- Urban Water TMU is [building bridges with Indigenous communities](#) and developing relationships in which traditional and western knowledge is shared and researchers collaborate with communities to find solutions to community-identified needs.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy



Sustainability Action Plan

- The university's [Sustainability Action Plan](#) and related guidelines for campus activities further demonstrate our commitment to take tangible steps towards a sustainable future.
- The plan include three long-term goals identified based on their alignment with institutional values, community input, benchmarking opportunities, institutional peers and best practices, government targets and global perspectives.
 1. Platinum STARS sustainability rating by 2035
 2. Zero-waste by 2035
 3. Net-zero Scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2045

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (cont'd)

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



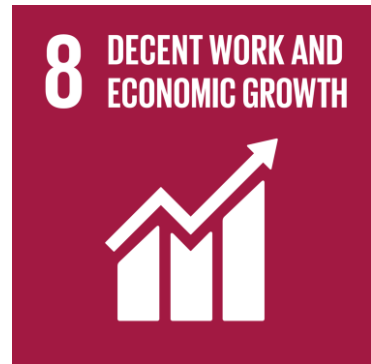
Campus energy efficiency

- The [Sustainable Building Guidelines](#) for new buildings and major renovations include robust energy and greenhouse gas emissions targets, waste reduction and diversion goals that promote sustainable building design.
- TMU's [Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan](#) reports on the university's energy consumption and identifies the short and long-term energy conservation strategy for the campus.

Working with industry

- The [Clean Energy Zone](#) is an incubator focused on clean, sustainable energy innovations including electric vehicles, renewable energy, energy storage and distribution, microgrids and net-zero city building.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth



Good employment practices

- TMU earned the top spot on the Forbes list of [Canada's Best Employers for Diversity 2023](#), a ranking of the top 150 organizations across the country promoting creative, diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces.
- [Access TMU](#) is a university-wide initiative with a goal of removing barriers to the full participation of all community members with disabilities.

Employee rights

- TMU has [collective agreements](#) with six unions that represent faculty and staff.

Students taking work placements: 3,076

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



Research income from industry and commerce: \$8,722,973

Incubators and Zone Learning

- [Zone Learning](#) provides support and resources for those who want to get practical experience in what it takes to build an initiative/venture from the ground-up.
 - There are [10 zones](#) that act as incubators for innovation – each with a focus on a different industry – that provide opportunities to shape initiatives from the ground up and gain real world experience.

Number of active spin-offs: 11

- Spin-offs are registered companies that are at least three years old that are set up to make good use of intellectual property that has originated from within TMU.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities



Supporting underrepresented groups

- The [Tri-Mentoring Program](#) offers spaces for students who identify as part of an equity-deserving group to connect and share their experiences.
 - Students have the opportunity to explore their identity, join a community and gain knowledge of resources.
 - Group mentoring sessions support students in finding a sense of belonging and empower them to discover what they need to be successful in their post-secondary journey.

Proportion of students with disabilities: 14.4%

Proportion of employees with disabilities: 8.6%

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



Public performances/local arts

- The [Act II Studio](#) and [Chrysalis](#) at The Creative School host performances open to the public throughout the year.
- [The Image Centre](#) is Canada's leading institution for the exhibition, research and collecting of photography, with a collection of nearly 400,000 photographic objects.
- The [Modern Literature and Culture Research Centre](#) preserves and advances modernist women's heritage and promotes modern Canadian heritage.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (cont'd)



Sustainable commuting and pedestrianized space

- The [Campus Public Realm Plan's](#) Campus Core Revitalization provides a vibrant and engaging configuration of public spaces, with Nelson Mandela Walk and parts of Gould Street and Victoria Street designed to prioritize pedestrians.
- TMU received the top rank globally in the 2023 [Sustainable Campus Index](#) for its campus transportation mix.
- TMU supports sustainable commuting with secure bike parking, a bike repair station, Bike Share stations, and electric vehicle charging on campus. Multiple subway and streetcar stops also border the campus.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (cont'd)



Building standards

- Our [Sustainable Building Guidelines](#) ensure our commitment to carbon reduction and environmental sustainability is reflected in the design and creation of our spaces.
 - The guidelines include robust energy and emissions performance targets, waste reduction and diversion goals and other requirements that promote sustainable building design.
 - The guidelines apply to all capital projects (new construction, additions and major renovations) and minor renovations with carbon and energy implications.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production



Minimizing waste

- To encourage responsible consumption habits, TMU's Sustainability Office organizes events on campus throughout July to support [Plastic Free July](#).
 - Students, staff and faculty participate in a series of challenges, leading to thousands of individual actions to reduce plastic consumption.
- TMU Eats introduced the [OZZI reusable to-go container program](#) to the Pitman and ILC dining halls to reduce waste and single-use food packaging by encouraging students, faculty and staff to forgo disposable containers for a more sustainable takeout option.
 - Each reusable to-go container is 100% recyclable and can be used up to 300 times.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production



Reducing consumption

- The TMU [Free Store](#) is a pop-up store dedicated to helping TMU students reduce their environmental impact and save money.
 - Choose from a variety of gently-used items like office supplies, electronics, home decor, kitchen supplies, books and more, all for free.
- The [TMU Furniture Rehome Program](#) facilitates the redistribution and reuse of quality surplus TMU furniture items and reduces landfill waste. If items cannot be rehomed on campus, they are made available to TMU community members for personal use or are otherwise offered to other public sector institutions, community organizations or TMU's Free Store.
- **Volume of recycled and composted material: 486.86 metric tonnes**

SDG 13: Climate Action



Proportion of energy from low-carbon sources: 50%

Sustainability initiatives

- TMU's Sustainability Office offers learning opportunities for students and employees on [actions they can take](#) on campus and beyond to contribute to a more sustainable future.
 - Sustainability Ambassadors lead and inspire students, faculty and staff with initiatives and campaigns to keep sustainability top of mind across the university.
 - In partnership with WWF Canada, students can apply to participate in the Living Planet @ Campus Program which allows them to take meaningful actions to improve sustainability practices within their own lives and on campus.
 - The Leadership Lab offers a Climate Leaders training program tailored to new change-makers on climate science, policy, communications and action.

SDG 13: Climate Action (cont'd)



Environmental education

- The [Environmental Applied Science and Management MSc and PhD](#) programs at TMU take a unique interdisciplinary approach to providing students with studies in environmental sciences, technology, and environmental management systems and decision-making.
- In the [Environment and Urban Sustainability BA \(Hons\)](#) program at TMU, students explore how citizens, corporations and governments resist or embrace and enact eco-friendly ideas and approaches.

Research

- Engineering professor Bala Venkatesh and his team have been working in collaboration with Hydro One and Peak Power on the [Forecasting and Modeling of Distributed Energy Resources, and Models for Distributed System Operator Planning and Operation](#) project for the planning and operating of power systems that include solar and wind power generators.

SDG 14: Life Below Water



Water education and research

- The [Geoffrey F. Bruce Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) are designed to support the next generation of freshwater leaders, policy researchers and practitioners and increase excellence in public policy to ensure the sustainability of Canada's freshwater resources.
- The [Spatial Ecology Lab](#) conducts research on land-water ecosystems, urban watersheds and human factors in watershed stewardship to better understand the impact of environmental stressors on species and on ecological functions.

SDG 14: Life Below Water (cont'd)



Supporting aquatic ecosystems

- [Urban Water TMU](#) has numerous projects to find solutions to pressing issues related to wastewater and environmental pollution. The institute also hosts a [seminar series](#) open to the public.
- TMU Eats is working directly with Ocean Wise to source and offer more [sustainable seafood options](#) on campus. Look for the Ocean Wise logo on dining hall menus to easily identify and choose products that ensure the health of our oceans for generations to come.

SDG 15: Life on Land



Protecting biodiversity and wildlife

- Aerospace Engineering professor Goetz Bramesfeld works with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) to [survey the natural habitats of woodland caribou](#) using a solar-powered aircraft. This gives ECCC unprecedented access to collect data and make important decisions for natural resource extraction and land management.
- [Parks in Action: Towers, Hubs and Opens Space Transformations](#) highlights the role of parks, open spaces, and the public realm in fostering climate action in Toronto's inner suburbs. This is a joint initiative between TMU's School of Cities and the University of Toronto.

SDG 15: Life on Land (cont'd)



Campus food

- The Pitman Dining Hall is a [3 Star Certified Green Restaurant](#) under the Green Restaurant Association's rigorous standards in categories like water efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable food, and chemical and pollution reduction.
- TMU Eats provides professional training for their chefs under the [Forward Food Program](#) developed by the Friends of Humane Society International. The hands-on training program teaches food service professionals how to incorporate plant-based foods into their menus and place sustainability at the centre of their menu decisions.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



Lincoln Alexander School of Law

- In 2023, the Lincoln Alexander School of Law (LASL) saw its first cohort of students graduate, with 159 students successfully completing the Juris Doctor Program.
- LASL offers a [legal clinic](#) in which students work with lawyers to provide free legal services to community members.
- A variety of [professional development programs](#) are also available through the Law School to serve practicing lawyers and business professionals in Ontario and beyond.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



University governance

- TMU has a bicameral governance structure consisting of a [Senate](#) and [Board of Governors](#).
- The university's annual financial reports are posted on [TMU's website](#).

Community engagement

- TMU's School of Medicine [engaged sector experts](#) on plans for the school's curriculum, scheduled to launch in 2025.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (cont'd)

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



Working with government

- Civil Engineering professor Bilal Farooq [worked with the Town of Innisfil and the City of Belleville](#) on pilot projects to develop on-demand transit solutions for low-density areas.
- Shelagh McCartney from the School of Urban and Regional Planning works in [partnership with First Nations communities](#) in Northern Ontario and the Northwest Territories to identify community housing and wellness priorities and co-develop housing solutions appropriate for the local context.
- Business professor Rupa Banerjee studied the effects of changes to assessment of foreign education credentials on migrants' labour market outcomes in a [collaborative research effort with Statistics Canada](#).

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (cont'd)



Policy initiatives

- Experts at TMU contribute to policymaking at various levels of government by providing guidance and serving on key committees. Examples include:
 - Architecture professor Jenn McArthur [served on the advisory board](#) for the City of Toronto to inform its [Net Zero by 2040 strategy](#).
 - The TransformLab at the School of Urban and Regional Planning worked with the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario to identify how [transportation finance](#) should navigate potential conflicts between policy objectives to fund the transportation system and to reduce GHG emissions.
 - Mathematics professor Alexey Rubtsov served on the federal government's [Financial Industry Forum on Artificial Intelligence](#), an initiative to help banks, investment firms and other financial institutions safely and [ethically use AI](#) and reduce bias in AI-generated decision-making.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



Research and collaboration

- TMU is a member of the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#), which mobilizes the world's leading academic and research institutes and leverages their strengths to help promote practical solutions to sustainable development challenges.
- Faculty of Science researchers are working with Colombian communities, policymakers and students to bring [water security to rural communities](#) in Colombia.
- The [International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership](#) seeks to explore and better understand the connection between children's rights to participation and protection. The partnership includes young people with lived experience, researchers and partner organizations from universities, NGOs, major human rights institutions, and governments from Canada and across the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia and Oceania.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals (*cont'd*)



Education and outreach for SDGs

- The Sustainability Office organized sustainability-focused events during [Orientation Week](#) to promote climate action and awareness on campus.
- The Sustainability Office and the Leadership Lab hosted the first TMU [Climate Week](#) from March 6 to 10, 2023. The event brought the campus community together to raise awareness about climate action, on and off campus, and examine how we as a community can work towards strengthening TMU's position as a leader in sustainability and climate action.
- [GRADVision Fundamentals](#) is a series of three virtual workshops providing an opportunity for graduate students across the university to work on the development of their vision as leaders working towards social transformation.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals (cont'd)

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



Partnerships beyond academia

- TMU faculties, institutes and researchers engage in cross-sectoral dialogue with governments, industry and non-profits to exchange ideas and use our expertise to advance progress. Examples include:
 - The annual [Reconciliation in Business](#) conference brings together leaders from Indigenous communities, industry, law and academia to discuss and advance Indigenous representation.
 - In 2023, TMU's [Reimagining Women in Leadership](#) event brought together MBA candidates and industry professionals from Canada, India, Uganda and the USA to exchange ideas on socially relevant business issues related to women in leadership.
 - The Centre for Free Expression [hosted 16 virtual public panels and conversations](#) in 2023–24, reaching audiences across Canada and the world. Topics included protecting civil liberties and challenges of AI for human rights and democracy.